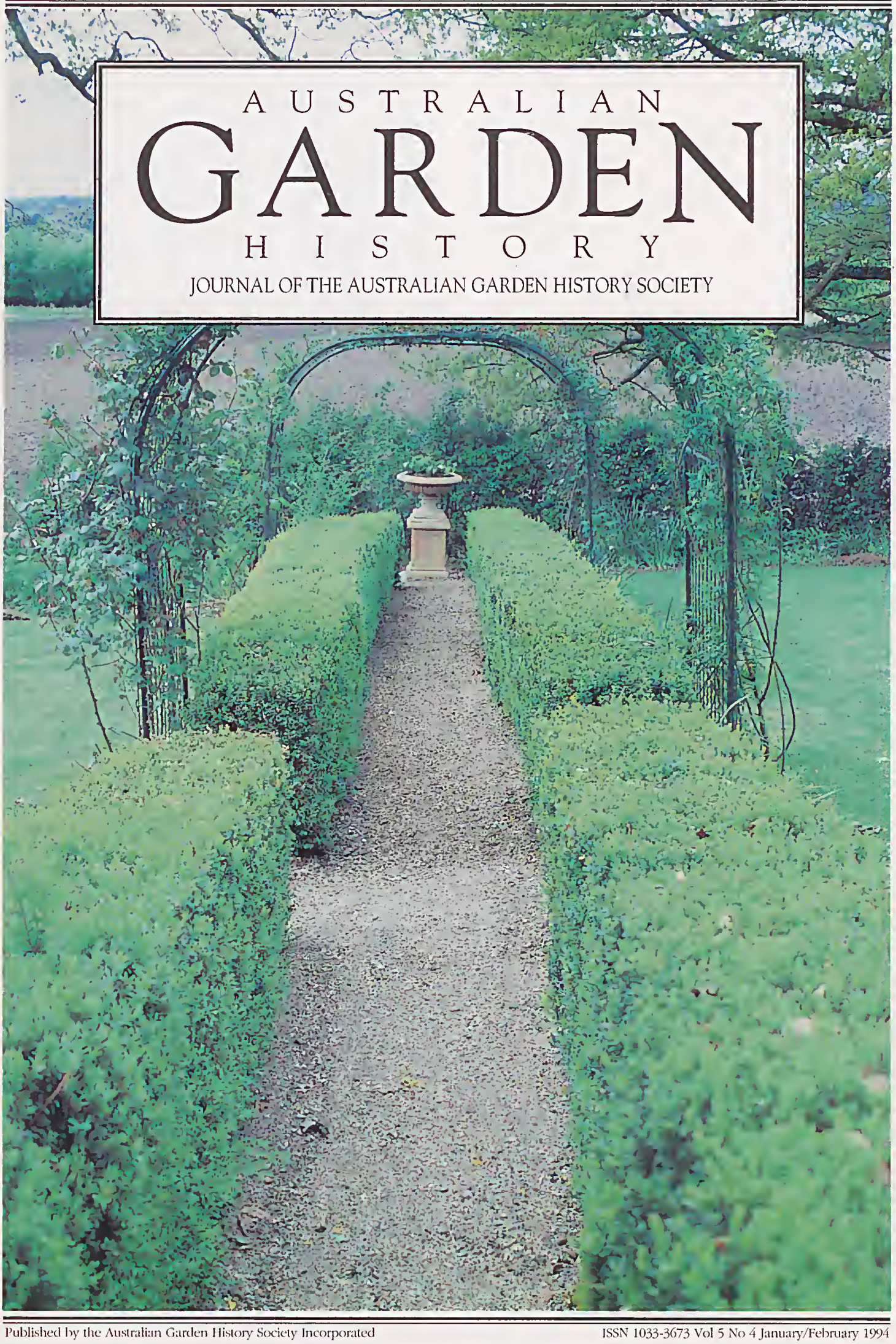
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Joanne Morris

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Joanne Morris is a garden lover who has published widely. She has produced a number of gardener's diaries for Collins publishers and has a keen interest in garden photography.

Cover: A touch of formality at Esk Farm

1994 Australian Garden History Society Tours

Following the success of the 1993 tours, Helen Andersson is planning to run two tours for Garden History Society members and friends during 1994.

Gardens of Southern NSW
April 1994
6 days

Gardens of Victoria
October 1994
5 days
(Planned as a pre-conference in association with the Garden History Conference in Melbourne)

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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Two Historic Glass Houses Conserved

Glass houses or conservatories are something we regard as quintessentially Victorian, yet in Australia they are comparatively rare. With the exception of those in botanic gardens they are rarely extant, although many more existed in Victorian times, particularly in the south of the country in Victoria and Tasmania.

In Tasmania perhaps the greater numbers of Australian glass houses survive. This is of course to do with climate, but also Tasmania has on the whole tended to preserve its nineteenth century buildings intact.

Perhaps the best early Victorian glass house surviving is that at Entally in northern Tasmania, fifteen kilometres from Launceston on the South Esk River. This glass house, which contains two chambers, is twenty five metres (eighty feet) long and was built in the mid 1840s by the Rev. and Hon. Thomas Reibey (1821-1912), sometime Premier of the State, and first native–born cleric.

The Reibeys came to Entally in 1818 when the property was taken up by Thomas Heydock Reibey (1796-1842), son of Mary Reibey of Sydney, but it was his son Thomas to whom the present appearance of Entally is due.

Like the sons of many rich families, he and his brother Charles were sent to England to be educated at Oxford, and Thomas returned to Tasmania newly married in 1843. He soon set about refining the estate of Entally he had recently inherited from his father.

The house was rebuilt, a chapel erected, and by 1846 the glass house constructed. A visitor in January 1846 mentions the 'grand house; the flower garden and greenhouse very handsome'. From then until his death he added considerably to the property, engaging the architect W H Clayton (1823-1877) to add Gothic cottages and to aggrandise a wing in the 1850s-1860s.

Whether the glass house was prefabricated in England is unclear. Its timber is Baltic built on a brick base. All is beautifully put together with components numbered and so on. The earliest photos of the building were taken in January 1860 when Professor John Smith of Sydney University stayed at Entally and took a number of significant photographs.

Growing interest in the State acquiring an historic property led to its purchase in 1948 and in 1950, following restoration, Entally was opened as a museum.

By the time of its purchase the property was in a run down condition and just as work was done to the house itself, so to the glass house. At this time the sills and top plate appear to have been replaced together with a number of rafters and mullions. The building since then had become neglected and new gutters seem to have added to its plight.

In 1990 when the architects were first consulted, the building was in a perilous state and leaning markedly in a western direction.

Research established the significance of the glass houses as the oldest large glass houses extant and a One Nation grant in 1992 as well as funds provided by the Tasmanian

The derelict glass house at Entally in June 1991



Clive Lucas.



Clive Lucas

Above: *The conservatory at Entally, Tasmania, photographed during November 1993, shortly after completed conservation works*
Below: *The newly conserved palm house at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, photographed in November 1993*



Clive Lucas

Mrs Thomas Riebey, her mother-in-law Mrs Thomas Haydock Rieby, and her niece, Miss Arthur, photographed at the eastern end of the Entally glass house on 6 January 1860 by Professor John Smith of Sydney University.



Macleay Museum, University of Sydney



Ian Stapleton

Work in progress on the palm house, June 1993

Government has allowed it to be thoroughly restored during 1993.

The building has been taken down to its brick base, the sill has been entirely replaced in local hardwood, the top plate repaired and rotten rafters and mullions replaced in red Baltic from which the building is primarily built. The sashes have also been taken apart and stiles, rails and bars replaced as necessary. The original sash doors have similarly been repaired.

The ground levels were found to have risen almost three hundred millimetres. Most of the original architectural hardware, such as spring catches and rollers, was intact, which allowed every second bay of the roof to open by means of pulleys. This has been put into working order once again. The sides contain hopper sashes which have also been put in order. The joinery has been repainted in its original broken white and the hardware blackened.

One half of the green house once had its glass frosted; this has been done again. As much as possible of the original glass (250mm x150mm panes) has been salvaged. This wonderful little building now functions as its builders intended.

The glass house in Sydney, built as a palm house, in the Royal Botanic Gardens is not as complex as Entally's late Georgian example. Here the glazing is fixed. Instead of the small Georgian panes it is glazed with patterned glass of the Edwardian period, both floral and pressed.

Unlike Entally, it is heated and retains its 1876 boiler house.

The palm house at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, dates from 1876, however all except for the plinth was replaced by a new superstructure in 1912 to the design of the then NSW Government Architect, George McRae (1858-1923).

By 1992 the palm house was in need of substantial refurbishment. Many of the timber members were rotten and haphazard glass replacement had led to a motley effect. More seriously, the heavy angle steel elbow brackets which made the structure act as a portal frame were badly corroded.

Wood rot had led in the 1970s to the replacement of all the lower section of woodwork with historically inaccurate timbers.

Following historical investigation and search for documents, it was decided that refurbishment works should reconstruct the glasshouse to its 1912 form, introducing some new pivot sashes to improve ventilation for the building's new use as an education space.

After propping, all of the elbow braces were removed, repaired, hot dipped galvanised and reinstalled. All of the rotten timberwork was replaced. This included the actual reproduction of the Redwood lower woodwork complete with beaded glazing stops and repair of the two end sash doors.

About fifty percent of the 1912 ribbed glazing had survived and this was rearranged on the southern side and northern roof of the building. Later patterned, c1920s pressed glass was concentrated on the east and north sides. Miraculously new matching pressed glass was found to make up missing areas. The building's electrical system was also replaced. The completed work was painted in the colour scheme chosen to complement the adjacent buildings in the Gardens.

The glass house was available again for use in September 1993.

Because of the rarity of historic glass houses their restoration is not often part of the conservation architect's repertoire. It is therefore interesting that the conservation of two such important garden buildings should occur almost simultaneously.

The builder at Entally was Anstie Constructions and in Sydney, G & Z Builders.

Clive Lucas

Tasmanian Gardens in the Spring

The 1993, Australian Garden History Society Conference hosted by the Tasmanian Branch in October was a most enjoyable event. However, for those lucky enough to join Helen Andersson's tour there were five extra days of sheer indulgence.

The tour commenced in Launceston, the second oldest city in Tasmania. The charm of early colonial buildings, largely unspoilt landscapes, helpful taxi drivers (no worries about five in a cab) and general kindness soon had us all altering our pace to suit that of the locals.

Our first expedition was a visit to a remarkable garden not far from Launceston. The garden of Dunedin is the creation of Annabel Scott, a gardener *formidable*. In the space of twelve years she took a neglected and heavily shaded garden, removing twenty-six enormous *Pinus radiata* as her first priority, and turned it into a beautifully designed, superbly hedged garden of enormous plant interest. It was no surprise to learn that this garden was included in the Open Garden Scheme.

The charm of early colonial buildings, largely unspoilt landscapes, helpful taxi drivers (no worries about five in a cab) and general kindness soon had us all altering our pace to suit that of the locals

Annabel was adamant about preparing her beds. This involves an application of two lethal doses of Roundup at two-weekly intervals. The beds are then layered with newspaper covered by cow manure from the farm (shovelled by her impressed, or, more accurately, unimpressed, children), followed by a final mulch of pea straw, fennel heads, Pyrethrum, or whatever suitable local crop happens to be available. The whole is left fallow for six months before planting.

Annabel was as hospitable and gracious as all the other gardeners we subsequently met. She was infinitely patient with our repeated questions and keen to share her knowledge, which was considerable. Her garden was a lovely tribute to her propagating skills.

For Richard Nolan, our invaluable arboreal expert, it was the choice of trees which made this garden special; a superb Hawthorn Maple (*Acer crataegifolium*), a large Trident Maple (*Acer beurgeranum*), a Celery Top Pine (*Phyllocladus aspenifolius*), and a handsome *Taxodium distichum*. Crab-apples in full bloom vied with the fresh spring growth on Magnolias and Birches.

For me, the manicured Cypress hedges which walled the garden on one side, with a matching hedge creating a Hidcote-style Long Walk that to the outbuildings at the rear, was the last thing I expected to find in a Tasmanian country garden.

The mayhem inflicted on it by the family bull (which must have thought it was paradise when it ambled into the garden the week before) was not as obvious to us as it was to the recovering Annabel.

The following day we visited four private country gardens in the Cressy and Longford districts.

A well-clipped Hawthorn hedge greeted us when we arrived at the first garden, putting us on notice that there were better things to come. According to Judy Humphries, the owner of Newry, unruly hedges all over Tasmania are being put into order now that machinery is available to do the job.

Accompanied by our hostess we wandered along a drive bordered by ancient pines underplanted by masses of White Honesty and Bluebells, to enter a cottage-style garden of tremendous charm. Although Judy started on the garden seventeen years previously, she was still planning new areas, like the geometrically laid out vegetable garden which had as its centrepiece an enormous copper whaling vat rescued from her grandmother who was planning to throw it out. Intersecting convict-brick paths and standard Iceberg roses gave this area a feeling of relaxed formality. Beyond the post-and-rail fence lay a pastoral scene which had us all frantically reaching for our cameras.

The garden surrounding the house was a blissful conglomeration of roses (sadly not yet in bloom), perennials, bulbs and shrubs. The top of a drystone wall beside the tennis court was home to a variety of small and interesting succulents. Shiny Giant Angelica made an unusual and interesting backdrop to Peonies, Rugosa, shrub and old-fashioned roses, Euphorbia, Cranesbills, Honesty, Arum Lilies, and a variety of other familiar cottage plants.

The second garden, Ravensworth, was interesting more for its plantings than for its design. It did much to extend our knowledge of cold climate and small alpine plants. Fortunately labels were to be found hidden under stones, the owner's artist son having previously made the droll observation, 'The garden looks like a cemetery with all those labels sticking up out of the ground'.

The majestic wall of elms which lined the approach to the farmhouse was an indication that the property had been established for some time

The third garden was a former Carmellite convent complete with grotto. Although this garden was a pleasure to walk through, it was even more pleasant relaxing on the lawn under the shade of enormous Oaks and Poplars with a glass of wine and a splendid lunch provided by Longford Hall's enthusiastic owner. A Dove Tree (*Davidia involucrata*), a tri-coloured Beech, a contorted Fillibut, numerous Dogwoods and a small but perfect white and pink tinged Flowering Quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) were some of our hostess's contributions.

Esk Farm was our final garden for the day and once



Joanne Morris

Above: *Suzie Ranicar's garden was a supurb setting to try her delicious Tasmanian Smokehouse Salmon*
Below: *Shades of Hidcote at Dunedin*



Joanne Morris



Joanne Morris

Above: *The romantic charm of Culzean*
Below: *The Clematis draped veranda at Malahide with elms in the background*



Joanne Morris

again we were made to feel very welcome by its owner, Jo Johnson. The majestic wall of elms which lined the approach to the farmhouse was an indication that the property had been established for some time. The garden is included in the Open Garden Scheme.

Although not a very big garden it is nevertheless very interesting. A descending pathway lined with clipped Box leads the visitor down one side of the garden towards the boundary fence where an urn on a plinth provides a charming focal point. A meandering path continues around the bottom of the garden under a fresh canopy of green towards a recently established bog garden.

The splendid 1930s house overlooks a spring-fed lake fringed with *Iris pseudocorus*, Louisiana Iris, and other bog plants. An island in the centre shelters Chestnut Teal, White and Grey Herons and Egyptian Geese from marauding Tasmanian Devils

From there one wanders back via a Wisteria walk towards the house where the verandah of a new extension groans with the weight of a prolific white Clematis, unexpectedly intertwined with *Pandorea pandorana*. Of the many lovely trees, a vibrant yellow flowered New Zealand Kowhai (*Sophora tetraptera*) demands the most attention.

Helen provided us with a wonderful day on Monday, but, unlike the words of the song, Tuesday was just as good.

For some of us, Culzean (pronounced 'Cullane'), turned out to be the high point of the tour. This English-style woodland garden was a mass of Bluebells, Lily of the Valley, Daffodils, Solomon's Seal, Foxgloves, Iris and Violets under mature Pine, Beech and Elm. We were seeing it at its peak. Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias and Magnolias completed the scene.

At Red Hill Farm, our next port of call, the Ranicars feted us to a memorable alfresco luncheon of Smokehouse salmon

The splendid 1930s house overlooks a spring-fed lake fringed with *Iris pseudocorus*, Louisiana Iris, and other bog plants. An island in the centre shelters Chestnut Teal, White and Grey Herons and Egyptian Geese from marauding Tasmanian Devils.

The lake also supports a quantity of rainbow trout and an escalating platypus population.

Although they were not in bloom, Dr Laker proudly showed us his many roses and his equally fine conifer collection.

At Red Hill Farm, our next port of call, the Ranicars feted us to a memorable alfresco luncheon of Smokehouse salmon. This was the family who pioneered the salmon farming industry. Seated at long tables under the silver birches, we were treated to an outstanding meal and an equally superb view of the Great Western Tiers across the valley.

Our return trip to Launceston included a visit to the Elizabeth Town nursery at Mole Creek. There we tracked down the recipe for the attractive hand-made tufa-like troughs and containers we had frequently come across and admired in the gardens we had been visiting. (Recipe available on application to the writer.)

Our final day presented us with a very different Tasmania when we headed for the drier east coast via the noted historic property Malahide, which was established in the 1930s.

We entered the property through a cobbled courtyard and emerged to an expanse of sweeping lawn planted with fifty or so Crabapples in full bloom. Closer to the house, a spectacular pair of large and leaning Allepo Pines (*Pinus halapensis*) framed the distant view of Mount Nicholas.

Clematis clambered happily up the verandah posts of this Early Georgian house. English Elms, smothered in blossom, towered even higher than the Pines. On the eastern side the smooth white trunks of a grove of birches (*Betula jacquemontii*) rivalled the fresh white paint on the picket fence behind.

We entered the property through a cobbled courtyard and emerged to an expanse of sweeping lawn planted with fifty or so Crabapples in full bloom

Nearby, a *Magnolia grandiflora* had been trained against the cool south wall of an old barn, while white roses basked in protected warmth on the sunny side.

Once again Helen pulled the rabbit out of the hat and presented us with another splendid picnic on the grass in the sheltered Cypress hedged cottage garden at Combend. Combend, which dates back to 1842, boasts what seems to be known as a 'boutique' vineyard, but we were disappointed to learn that their entire vintage had sold out shortly after it was exhibited, so that even a tasting was out of the question. Our hosts, on the other hand, were modestly jubilant.

The final garden on our itinerary was spectacular for the age and size of its trees, which bestowed an air of peaceful timelessness. An avenue of one-hundred-year-old Oaks lined the drive of what is one of the earliest farming properties in the Derwent Valley.

It was an appropriate choice for the conclusion of a truly enjoyable Australian Garden History Society pre-conference tour.

Joanne Morris

Victorian Branch

Marysville and Lake Mountain Tour

On the weekend of November 6 and 7, 1993, thirty five members of the Victorian Branch visited several delightful gardens in the Marysville district, and on Sunday toured the Big Trees Reserve and Lake Mountain alpine region with Rodger and Gwen Elliot. The weather forecast was not promising as showers were predicted for the weekend. Only 48 hours earlier, snow fell on Lake Mountain which we were later to enjoy under blue skies.

The tour began in Burrengeen Park, Marysville where we were met by members of the Marysville Garden Club, who had arranged the garden visits. First settled in 1863, Marysville became a popular holiday resort in the 1920s. The tree-lined streets of planes, oaks and elms provide a pleasant setting for many guesthouses and homes. Cool climate plants, especially the rhododendrons and dogwoods were in full flower and provided plenty of colour.

At Cumberland, the bright pink leaves of *Cedrella sinensis* were on show and other plantings included a fine Weeping Elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii'), Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*), Spanish Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), a very large *Magnolia* x *soulangeana*, an uncommon *Styrax japonica*, *Azara lanceolata*, *Enkianthus campanulatus*, and many Rhododendron cultivars in shades of white, pink and red.

Other fine garden plantings included Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea'), Tricolor Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Tricolor'), numerous Flowering Dogwoods (*Cornus florida* and *Cornus florida* 'Rubra') and *Prunus serrulata* cultivars.

The conifer group were also well represented with fine specimens of *Cupressus*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Thuja*, *Picea*, *Cryptomeria* and *Pinus*. At Kooringa Guesthouse we were able to view Victoria's finest Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). This tree has a trunk circumference of three metres, a height of twenty seven metres and is listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees of Victoria. Other fine trees included *Paulownia tomentosa*, *Quercus palustris*, *Pinus wallichiana* and an unusual narrow form of *Cupressus lusitanica*.

Late in the afternoon we travelled to St Fillan on the Maroondah Highway. This historic garden was established in the early 1880s by the Hon. James Munroe, an early Premier of Victoria. The entrance to the property is marked by an attractive cast iron gateway and the long drive is lined with *Pinus radiata*, *Acer rubra*, *Quercus robur*, *Populus alba*, *Ulmus minor* 'Variegata' and a rare *Laurus azorica*.

The 1.2 hectare garden surrounding the 1930s residence, contains many fine conifers including some of the finest examples of the species in Victoria. It is believed that Ferdinand von Mueller assisted with the planting. Notable trees include *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, *Cupressus torulosa*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Thujopsis dolabrata* (large), *Abies nordmanniana*, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, *Cupressus lusitanica* var. *benthamii*, *Quercus cerris*, *Arbutus canariensis*, *Tilia* x *europaea*, *Acer* sp. and several large *Carpinus betulus*. Beside the house is an old English Box hedge (*Buxus sempervirens*) and beyond the drive a sunken lily pond surrounded by a ring of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*). This planting is thought to date from the 1930s, and the garden has recently been extended with recent plantings of specimen trees to the west.

At The Hermitage, where we spent the evening, is an interesting collection of early buildings being restored by John and Val Stafford. The complex was erected by the internationally known photographer, John William Lindt, in 1894. The garden is approached along a short drive lined with Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) to a turning circle dominated by a large Linden (*Tilia* x *europaea*). On the terraces between the house and lych gate are numerous Rhododendrons, Hydrangeas and, in the beds beside the house, large *Camellia japonica* cultivars and an old *Kalmia latifolia*.

At the entrance to the Studio is a remarkable *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans'. This multi-branched tree is the largest specimen in Victoria, measuring forty two metres in height with a trunk circumference of almost four metres, and is listed on the National Trust Register of Signifciant Trees of Victoria. Another tree on the Register is a remnant forest giant of *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa* with a trunk circumference of over ten metres and a height of almost sixty metres. North of the Studio is a row of four large conifers, *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and *Cryptomeria japonica*. Other large trees include two *Abies nordmanniana*, *Cupressus sempervirens*, *Laurus nobilis*, and east of the main house, remnants of an old orchard.

On the terraces between the house and lych gate are numerous Rhododendrons, Hydrangeas and, in the beds beside the house, large *Camellia japonica* cultivars and an old *Kalmia latifolia*

On Sunday, the group drove to the Big Trees Reserve stopping en route to visit the Big Culvert, an early constructed stone bridge for the track leading to the Woods Point goldfields. Situated in Beech forest we viewed the new bronze leaves of *Nothofagus cunninghamii* and the young fronds on *Cyathea australis*. At the Big Trees Reserve we walked to the 'Big Tree' located in a stand of giant Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*). It once stood at ninety two metres but was reduced to eighty four metres by a wind storm in 1959.

At Lake Mountain we walked to Echo Flat, most of it through snow, much to our surprise. The glistening trunks of Snow Gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *nipbophila*) with snow at their base was especially attractive. Many interesting alpine plants were observed and fortunately a number were in flower, including *Hovea montana* with deep purple flowers, and the large stands of the lemon-flowering *Phebalium phylicifolium* were just beginning.

The tour was very successful and thanks must be extended to Rodger and Gwen Elliot, and especially Di Renou who arranged the visits and organised the evening meal.

John Hawker

Victorian Branch

The Landscape of Castle Howard

In November the Victorian Branch was presented with an informative talk by Dr Christopher Ridgeway on the history and restoration of the Castle Howard landscape. Dr Ridgeway, Librarian at Castle Howard since 1985, has been overseeing and cataloguing the extensive collections and researching Castle Howard, including the garden and buildings.

He was in Australia to research the life and work of the landscape gardener, William Andrews Newfield, who worked at Castle Howard in the 1850s and 1860s, and whose papers are held in a private collection.

Using plans constructed from early drawings and photographs, we were able to observe a simple building and garden undergo a transformation in the 1700s to a grand and vast designed landscape

Dr Ridgeway provided information on the evolution of the garden – what surely must be one of the grandest designs ever attempted. The Castle Howard landscape was achieved through the efforts of three men: Charles III, Earl of Carlisle; Sir John Vanburgh, who was also laying out the grounds of Stowe and Blenheim Palace; and Nicholas Hawksmoor.

Using plans constructed from early drawings and photographs, we were able to observe a simple building and garden undergo a transformation in the 1700s to a grand and vast designed landscape.

The history of many of the buildings were explained, including the Temple of Four Winds (designed by Vanburgh, and built after his death in 1726 by Hawksmoor); New River Bridge (c.1744) and Hawksmoor's Mausoleum (begun in 1728, completed c.1745); the pyramid, gateway and obelisk (1714); and lost buildings including the Temple of Venus, designed by Hawksmoor. The restoration work that has taken place to these buildings was also discussed.

The design of the Castle Howard landscape has undergone several changes. In 1710 Ray Wood was a maze of paths and statuary, and the forecourt was dotted with statues and obelisks. In the 1850s and 1860s, William Nesfield (1793-1864) laid out an elaborate parterre around the Atlas Fountain which was bought from the Great Exhibition in 1851. Nesfield also laid out the formal gardens radiating from the Palm House at Kew. The parterre was removed in the late nineteenth century and replaced with lawn and hedges.

In 1984 George Howard died and his son, the Hon. Simon Howard, decided to 'restore' the Castle Howard landscape.

After years of neglect, the ponds had silted up and become over-run with tree seedlings and rushes. In the 1980s, funding was obtained from grant aid and the resources of Castle Howard to restore the South Lake, central pond and New River. The cascade and New River bridge were restored and many of the missing stone ornaments were found in the lake bed. Recently the Prince of Wales jets were restored and the elaborate water system, fed by a half-million gallon reservoir in Ray Wood, and finishing at an old mill on the New River, has been returned to working order.

This is not the end, however, as many of the buildings, especially the Mausoleum, require urgent conservation works.

John Hawker

Italian Gardens

Ethne Clarke, keynote speaker for the Hobart Conference, spoke to forty members and friends on the influence of Renaissance gardens on twentieth century design.

Ethne's interest in Italian gardens began as a child looking at her great grandmother's photo albums of the Tuscany region. Several years ago, she and her family spent a prolonged visit in Tuscany. From that visit she wrote *The Gardens of Tuscany*, following in the tradition of Edith Wharton, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, Georgina Mason and Harold Acton.

We were shown beautiful slides of Renaissance gardens, Ethne emphasising the design elements of topiary and evergreen hedges, terraces and water, the movement between light and shade and the splendid views over the Tuscan landscape.

We were shown beautiful slides of Renaissance gardens, Ethne emphasising the design elements of topiary and evergreen hedges, terraces and water, the movement between light and shade and the splendid views over the Tuscan landscape

In this century Villa Gamberaia, severely damaged during the Second World war, was restored by Dr Marchi shortly after the end of the war. There were many wealthy American and English expatriates who made Tuscany their home. Bernard Berensen, the art historian, with the young English architect Cecil Pinsent, designed a garden for Il Tatti in the Renaissance tradition. Pinsent then designed Le Balze, a new house and garden for an American. Meanwhile, Arthur Acton recreated the gardens at La Pietra. The villa gardens were a chief source or inspiration for many English designers, Harold Peto, Lawrence Johnston and Vita Sackville-West.

Interest in Italian Renaissance gardens has again been revived with many people including these gardens on their itinerary.

Di Ellerton

Sydney/Northern NSW Branch

Gardenesque at Vaucluse House, Sydney, 31 October 1993

Historic Vaucluse House in Sydney's eastern suburbs, a twenty seven acre garden estate that was the residence of William Charles Wentworth from 1829 to 1853, was again the venue this year for *Gardenesque*. In past years this has been a Spring fair event but the Curator of Vaucluse House, Michael Bogle, changed the focus this year to what he considers the Historic Houses Trust do best, that is provide information about heritage, and in particular nineteenth century gardens.

The Sydney branch of the Australian Garden History Society was invited to participate. Members staffed a stall for the day, thus providing a great opportunity to promote AGHS and its aims.

After threatening to rain in the morning, it cleared to a wonderful spring day, and though crowds were not large, there was a steady flow of people past the stall. This made for a very pleasant day of meeting and talking with visitors about AGHS activities, handing out membership application material, and answering queries.

Visitors to *Gardenesque*, from such disparate places as Quirindi, Orange and Bringelly, as well as Sydneysiders, came seeking information sources and advice about restoring gardens from remnants surrounding their old cottages and houses. It was reassuring to AGHS members to find such keen interest in rebuilding and preserving the old rather than ignoring the historical aspect of a garden when creating something new.

It was also heartening that some of these people were young couples with lots of enthusiasm and energy for the task ahead, wanting to know how to research and develop their projects in order to faithfully represent the period of the building.

Several visitors joined as new members of AGHS and along with a number of others, purchased copies of the Journal and other AGHS items which were available for sale. Those attending this event included landscape and horticulture students, gardeners from other historic properties and interested members of the public. Some of our current members also called in to support AGHS efforts.

A special visitor to *Gardenesque* was Ethne Clarke, keynote speaker at the AGHS Conference in Tasmania. Ethne was enjoying a short holiday in Sydney after the busy time spent lecturing in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia, before retuning home to Norfolk in the U.K. Sydney AGHS members were pleased to have this opportunity to meet Ethne and to extend their hospitality.

Stalls of many types offered merchandise in keeping with the theme, such as seeds, plants, craft items, garden books, ornaments and furniture, as well as providing information about heritage gardens. Vaucluse House was open for inspection.

At various times during the day talks were given by experts. Topics included 'Garden History & Landscape Architecture' (Michael Lehany), 'Nineteenth Century Painting' (James Broadbent), 'Vaucluse House in the Twentieth Century' (Sally Webster), and 'Art and Science of Water Features' (Dirk Slotboom). These talks attracted much interest and were well attended.

Also of interest was the restored garden of Vaucluse House which was reopened in 1993 after parts of it had been completely rebuilt using archaeological evidence and old photographic records. The gravel used for paths (restored from concrete) was analysed to obtain an identical match with the existing gravel. The original drainage system was identified, unearthed and reinstated.

Refreshments were available in the garden and tea rooms, and some visitors enjoyed a picnic in the bushland area adjacent to the carpark. Hay rides and an ice cream vendor delighted the children. The visitors to *Gardenesque* obviously enjoyed the opportunity to inspect this remarkably intact nineteenth century estate, and to collect information about heritage gardens. The organisers of the event were well pleased with the attendance on the day. AGHS members working on the stall also enjoyed themselves, and felt the promotional opportunity for the Society was very worthwhile.

Jan Gluskie

Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch

Robertson Rainforest

On Sunday, 30 October, members of the Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch of the AGHS spent a day in Robertson. The most eastern town in the Southern highlands of NSW, Robertson sits high on the escarpment above Wollongong. Members gathered for morning tea and a walk through the garden of Robin and Ron Jeffcoat at Longfield outside Robertson.

Robin, as well as being a past member of the National Committee, is well known as a painter and craft teacher. Her sense of colour is reflected in brilliant plantings of rainbow shading cascading down a sloping site to a lake. Unusual plants such as Blue Ixia, Tree Peony, Geums and perennial *Digitalis* mingle with flowering shrubs; all against a green meadow covered with Buttercups - truly an artist's palette.

Robin and Ron are generous in their hospitality and we thank them for co-ordinating the day, and for allowing us to meet in their garden.

Members then drove to the Robertson Nature Reserve, a five hectare area of warm temperate rainforest. The Reserve is of great importance as it is one of the few remnants of the Yarrawa Brush (as it was called) which, prior to European settlement, covered some 2,500 ha around what is now Robertson township. We were met there by Mr Leon Hall who is the local expert on this reserve. He gave us a short talk on its history and told us what to look out for. Mr Hall is the son of Dorothy Hall, well known herbalist and environmentalist. When we entered the forest we were immediately aware of the overshadowing canopy and a drop in temperature – it was like entering another world.

The dominant tree in the canopy is the Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*), the leaves of which have a distinctive smell when crushed. Another canopy tree is the Pos-

sumwood (*Quintinia sieberi*), which has the unusual habit of beginning its life on the trunks of Tree Ferns; Leon actually pointed out remnants of Tree Ferns supporting the Possumwood. We saw many beautiful Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*) which have smooth whitish bark, often mottled with lichens.

In the understorey, the plants have adapted to the soft dappled light, and we had pointed out to us the Tree Violet (*Hymenanthera dentata*), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*), Featherwood (*Polysoma cunninghamii*) and Brush Pepperbush (*Tasmania insipida*). Throughout the whole area vines hang from the branches, epiphytic ferns attach themselves to branches and ground ferns abound. We were told that the area supports a wealth of bird life – we heard many, particularly the Eastern Whip Bird and the Satin Bower Bird, but saw few.

We finished the walk and left that magic world behind us and I am sure with a greater appreciation and understanding of this unique and beautiful rainforest.

After thanking and showing our appreciation to Mr Hall, we headed off to the Robertson cemetery.

Trish Goodman

Report on Christmas Special Dinner, Rotherwood

A Christmas Special Dinner was held recently at historic Rotherwood at Sutton Forest to celebrate another enjoyable and productive year for the Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch of the AGHS.

Over sixty members and their friends were served champagne and savouries on the northern terrace overlooking the formal rose garden that was in full bloom, followed by a sumptuous candle-lit dinner.

After dinner we were entertained by author and photographer Trisha Dixon who gave an excellent illustrated talk on the recent AGHS annual conference held in Tasmania.

Katie Gay

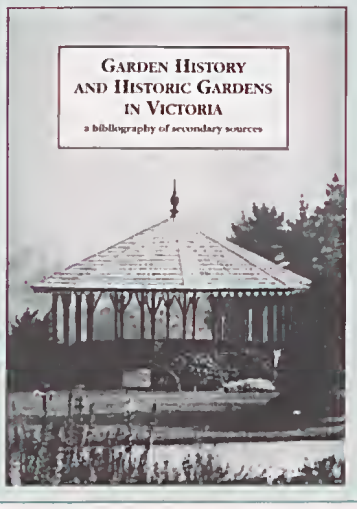
Australian Garden History Society Publications

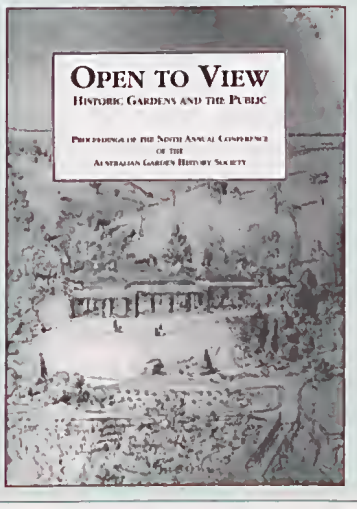
Historic Gardens in Australia: Guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans by Chris Betteridge and Howard Tanner, 1983. Limited stocks of this title are still available for $10 (includes postage) from the AGHS, c/– Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, Victoria, 3141.

Garden History and Historic Gardens in Victoria: A bibliography of secondary sources, just published by the Victorian Branch. Lists over 300 books, reports and journal articles; essential reference work for students and researchers. $5 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.

Open to View: Historic Gardens and the Public, proceedings of the ninth annual conference of the Australian Garden History Society (1988). Includes articles by Paul Fox, Peter Watts, James Hitchmough, John Foster and John Sales. $10 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.







CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Thursday 24

Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens. Tour of grounds with Head Gardener, Greg Mulchay. Picnic tea followed by lecture on the history of the Melbourne Zoo by Catherine de Courcy. Meet inside the main entrance. **TIME:** 6.00 to 9.30 pm. **COST:** Members $30; Guests $35 (includes Zoo entry, guided tour, lecture and picnic hamper). **BOOKINGS:** essential and close Friday 18 February. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office (03) 650 5043.

ACT, MONARO AND RIVERINA BRANCH

- Saturday 26

Visit to Burnima at Bombala and Curry Flat at Nimmitabel; gardens that need to cope with the cold in winter. **ENQUIRIES:** ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch, GPO Box 1630, Canberra, ACT 2601.

MARCH

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Thursday 17

An illustrated talk by Barry Moignard on the well-known Kelways Nursery, England, breeders of Paeony-roses and Irises, instrumental in establishing the Chelsea Flower Show, and plant exporter to Europe, including Monet's garden at Giverny. **VENUE:** Merton Hall, Anderson Street, South Yarra. **TIME:** 7.30 pm. **COST:** Members $5; Guests $7. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office (03) 650 5043.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/ SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Saturday 19

The day will take the form of a lecture by John Brookes, famous English landscape designer and author, followed by lunch and then visits to some interesting gardens in the district.

APRIL

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 24

Tour of Nobelius Heritage Nursery, Lake Emerald Arboretum, and 'Glen Harrow', the J C Cole Nursery at Belgrave. Talks on these two early Victorian nurseries and inspection of remnant plantings and rare trees. **VENUE:** Nobelius Museum, Crichton Road, Emerald - Melway Ref: 127 G4. **TIME:** from 10.00 am. **COST:** Members $10; Guests $12 (includes morning tea), BYO lunch, self drive. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **ENQUIRIES:** John Hawker (03) 628 5477.

MAY

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Sunday 22

Please keep this day free for a picnic at Bundanon – famous property of Arthur and Yvonne Boyd given to the nation in 1993. The day will include an inspection of the garden and a conducted tour of the house and studio.

JUNE

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 14

Illustrated talk by Trisha Dixon on the Gardens and Plants of Edna Walling. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 8.00 pm **BOOKINGS:** essential. **COST:** Members $7; Guests $10; Students $5. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office: (03) 650 5043.

AUGUST

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 9

Annual General Meeting. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 7.30 pm

SEPTEMBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 11

Lecture and tour on Melbourne's Parks and Gardens – Past and Future by Georgina Whitehead. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 10.00 am.. **COST:** Members $10; Guests $13; Students $5. BYO lunch. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office (03) 650 5043.

OCTOBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Friday 21 to Monday 24

1994 National Conference 'A Changing Landscape' – A study of the Macedon Ranges. **VENUE:** Exhibition Building, Nicholson Street, Carlton.

- Monday 24

Post Conference Garden Tour

DECEMBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Monday 5

Christmas Party. **VENUE:** Williamstown Botanic Gardens.



Joanne Morris

Above: *The bare limbs of a shapely Catalpa, which will not flower until Chistmas at Culzean*
Below: *The stunning grove of* Betula jacquemontii *designed by Dr. Brian Morley of Malahide*



Joanne Morris

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